DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 417 813 PS 026 368

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TITLE	Locked Doors: States Struggling To Meet the Child Care Needs of Low-Income Working Families.
INSTITUTION	Children's Defense Fund, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Ford Foundation, New York, NY.; Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
PUB DATE	1998-03-00
NOTE	81p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Children's Defense Fund, 25 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001 ($5.95, plus $2 shipping and handling).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Budgeting; Child Welfare; *Day Care; Early Childhood Education; Family (Sociological Unit); *Financial Needs; *Financial Support; Grants; *Low Income Groups; Poverty; State Aid; State Federal Aid; State Regulation; State Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	Affordability; Child Care and Development Block Grants; Child Care Costs; *Child Care Needs; Dependent Care Tax Credit; Subsidized Child Care Services; Welfare Reform; Working Poor

ABSTRACT

This survey of child care administrators from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, conducted by the Children's Defense Fund, examined the adequacy of federal and state funding for child care and state child care policies. Data were collected by means of phone interviews and verified with administrators following collection. The findings indicate that state child care subsidy programs are so under-funded that they cut off eligibility at family income levels far below the level allowed by federal law and what is needed by families. Even low-income working families who meet state income guidelines cannot get needed help because of shortages. Administrators in 43 states were not confident that their state could serve all eligible families if they knew they were eligible. State child care funds are stretched so thin that even families receiving subsidies do not receive enough assistance. A majority of the administrators anticipated being unable to serve eligible families in the future as welfare work requirements rise unless there are new investments in child care assistance. Recommendations based on these findings include the need for strong federal action, increased investments for the Child Care and Development Block Grant program, tax credits for families who need child care, state expansions of child care investments, and increased efforts by local governments and private sector organizations to support parents and make child care more affordable. (Tables delineating specific findings by state are appended. Contact information for survey respondents is also listed.) (KB)

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